

الله
رسول
محمد

THE STRUGGLE OF THE MESSENGERS

Allah has written:
"I will be victorious, I and My
messengers." Allah is Most
Strong, Almighty.
(Sûrat al-Mujadala, 21)

HARUN YAHYA

Throughout history, Allah has sent messengers to every society to deliver His Divine message. As we see in the Qur'an, the behavior and moral quality of these special people have been examples to the believers. For this reason, it is important for every believer to learn what they experienced during their lives.

What the Qur'an says about the struggles of the messengers is certainly enlightening and instructive for believers. The examples given in this book serve to remind believers of the messengers' good moral character and sincere efforts. The Qur'an contains many stories about these people, for: **"There is instruction in their stories for people of intelligence. This is not a narration that has been invented, but a confirmation of all that came before, a clarification of everything, and a guidance and a mercy for people who believe"** (Surah Yusuf, 111).



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, who writes under the pen-name Hazen Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in helping many to return their faith in Allah, and, in many others, to gain a deeper insight into their faith. Hazen Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, regardless of their age, race, or nationality for they focus on one objective: to broaden the reader's perspective by encouraging him or her to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of Allah and His unity, and to live by the values He prescribed for them.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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By Harun Yahya
Translated by Ron Evans
Edited by Jay Willoughby

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Abbreviations used:
(*saas-sall-Allahu 'alyahi wa sallam*): May Allah bless him and grant him peace (following a reference to Prophet Muhammad)
(*as-'alayhi's-salam*): Peace be upon him (following a reference to the prophets)

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The Struggle of the Messengers

**Allah has written: "I will be victorious, I and My
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(Surat al-Mujadala, 21)

HARUN YAHYA

October, 2006

To the Reader

A special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution because this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation—and therefore, Allah's existence—over the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the chance to read only one of our books, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

All the author's books explain faith-related issues in light of Qur'anic verses, and invite readers to learn Allah's words and to live by them. All the subjects concerning Allah's verses are explained so as to leave no doubt or room for questions in the reader's mind. The books' sincere, plain, and fluent style ensures that everyone of every age and from every social group can easily understand them. Thanks to their effective, lucid narrative, they can be read at one sitting. Even those who rigorously reject spirituality are influenced by the facts these books document and cannot refute the truthfulness of their contents.

This and all the other books by the author can be read individually, or discussed in a group. Readers eager to profit from the books will find discussion very useful, letting them relate their reflections and experiences to one another.

In addition, it will be a great service to Islam to contribute to the publication and reading of these books, written solely for the pleasure of Allah. The author's books are all extremely convincing. For this reason, to communicate true religion to others, one of the most effective methods is encouraging them to read these books.

We hope the reader will look through the reviews of his other books at the back of this book. His rich source material on faith-related issues is very useful, and a pleasure to read.

In these books, unlike some other books, you will not find the author's personal views, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, pessimistic arguments that create doubts in the mind and deviations in the heart.

The Struggle of the Messengers

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messengers." Allah is Most Strong, Almighty.**

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HARUN YAHYA

October, 2006

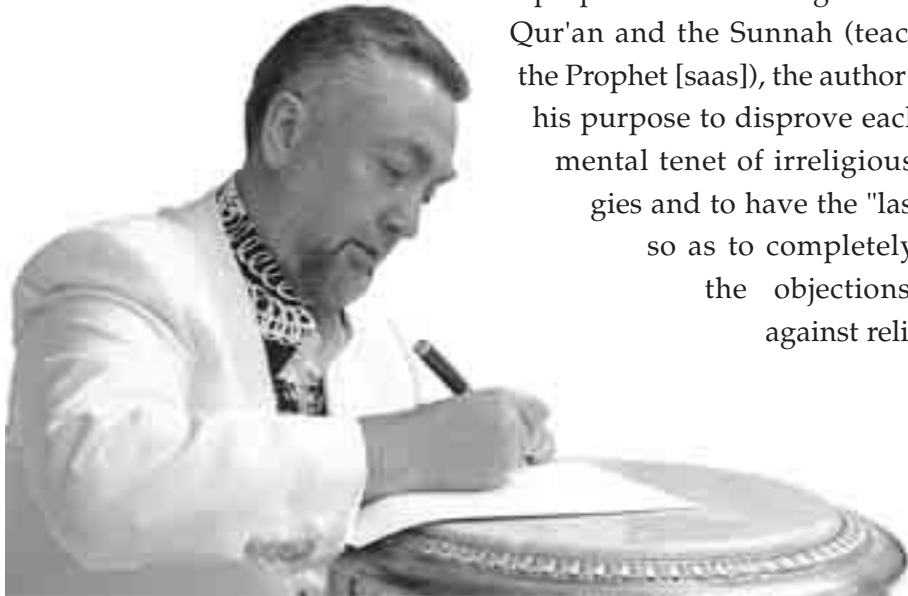
About the Author

Now writing under the pen-name of HARUN YAHYA, he was born in Ankara in 1956. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Ankara, he studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, he has published many books on political, scientific, and faith-related issues. Harun Yahya is well-known as the author of important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, their invalid claims, and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and such bloody ideologies as fascism and communism.

Harun Yahya's works, translated into 57 different languages, constitute a collection for a total of more than 45,000 pages with 30,000 illustrations.

His pen-name is a composite of the names Harun (Aaron) and Yahya (John), in memory of the two esteemed prophets who fought against their peoples' lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the Final Scripture) and Prophet Muhammad (saas), last of

the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet [saas]), the author makes it his purpose to disprove each fundamental tenet of irreligious ideologies and to have the "last word," so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. He



uses the seal of the final Prophet (saas), who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, as a sign of his intention to offer the last word.

All of Harun Yahya's works share one single goal: to convey the Qur'an's message, encourage readers to consider basic faith-related issues such as Allah's existence and unity and the Hereafter; and to expose irreligious systems' feeble foundations and perverted ideologies.

Harun Yahya enjoys a wide readership in many countries, from India to America, England to Indonesia, Poland to Bosnia, Spain to Brazil, Malaysia to Italy, France to Bulgaria and Russia. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, Swahili, Hausa, Dhivehi (spoken in Mauritius), Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, Indonesian, Bengali, Danish and Swedish.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering faith in Allah and gaining deeper insights into their faith. His books' wisdom and sincerity, together with a distinct style that's easy to understand, directly affect anyone who reads them. Those who seriously consider these books, can no longer advocate atheism or any other perverted ideology or materialistic philosophy, since these books are characterized by rapid effectiveness, definite results, and irrefutability. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence, since these books refute such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the books written by Harun Yahya.

This is no doubt a result of the Qur'an's wisdom and lucidity. The author modestly intends to serve as a means in humanity's

search for Allah's right path. No material gain is sought in the publication of these works.

Those who encourage others to read these books, to open their minds and hearts and guide them to become more devoted servants of Allah, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would only be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books that create confusion in people's minds, lead them into ideological chaos, and that clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in people's hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome disbelief and to disseminate the Qur'an's moral values. The success and impact of this service are manifested in the readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and other ordeals endured by the vast majority of people is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This can be ended only with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it. Considering the state of the world today, leading into a downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, clearly this service must be provided speedily and effectively, or it may be too late.

In this effort, the books of Harun Yahya assume a leading role. By the will of Allah, these books will be a means through which people in the twenty-first century will attain the peace, justice, and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

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Foreword

Throughout history, Allah has sent messengers to every society to deliver His Divine message. As we see in the Qur'an, the behavior and moral quality of these special people have been examples to the believers. For this reason, it is important for every believer to learn what they experienced during their lives.

What the Qur'an says about the struggles of the messengers is certainly enlightening and instructive for believers. Prophet Muhammad (saas) is the last messenger. As the Qur'an tells us:

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of Allah and the Final Seal of the prophets. Allah has knowledge of all things. (Surat al-Ahzab, 40)

But as revealed in another verse, **"Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same as those who came before you? Poverty and illness afflicted them, and they were shaken to the point that the messenger and those who believed with him asked: 'When is Allah's help coming?...'"** (Surat al-Baqara, 214), future generations will experience similar things to what His messengers have undergone.

Those who are hostile to our Prophet (saas) and other messen-

gers and so try to prevent the spread of the true religion they communicated will harass the believing community following their path. As the Qur'an says: **"Allah desires to make things clear to you, to guide you to the correct practices of those before you, and to turn toward you. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"** (Surat an-Nisa', 26). All Muslims will witness this. And so it is very important for them to examine carefully what the Qur'an says about the messengers' struggles.

The examples given in this book serve to remind believers of the messengers' good moral character and sincere efforts. The Qur'an contains many stories about these people, for: **"There is instruction in their stories for people of intelligence. This is not a narration that has been invented, but a confirmation of all that came before, a clarification of everything, and a guidance and a mercy for people who believe"** (Surah Yusuf, 111).

The Messengers' Struggle

People choose various teachers to guide them through life. For many, the most important teachers are their family, friends, and societies. They form their value judgments and general impressions of what is right and wrong from their society. Some individuals look to ideologies for guidance in the belief that the founder of their personal ideology is a superior person whose teachings can reveal the truth to them. Other individuals profess no ideology, preferring to be guided by their own intuitive intelligence.

However, all of these ideas rest on a common falsehood. Those who claim society as their teacher and adopt some "superior" individual or their own intelligence as their guide are rejecting or ignoring an essential truth: Human beings are created and therefore are indebted to their Creator, Allah, for everything they possess. Those who consider their own body and surroundings, the sky, and everything else that exists will clearly see that Allah created them.

Allah created human beings, and there is certainly a purpose for this creation. The Qur'an reveals this truth: **"We did not create heaven and Earth and everything in between them as a game"** (Surat al-Anbiya', 16). Another verse also reveals this purpose: "I

only created jinn and humanity to worship Me" (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 56).

Humanity was created solely to serve Allah. But we must be careful not to misunderstand: This does not mean that human beings have to continuously engage in certain acts of worship throughout their lives. Indeed, prayer and all other acts of worship related in the Qur'an are binding upon all believers, and every believer is obliged to do these things in accordance with the Qur'an's teachings. But being Allah's servant, which encompasses every aspect of life, primarily means coming to know Allah by being close to Him and living one's life according to His words. People who live such a life enjoy the best, the most content, and the happiest life possible. All of Allah's rules are very easy, for He created humanity in such a way that it is part of human nature to take pleasure from serving Him:

So set your face firmly towards the Religion as a pure natural believer, Allah's natural pattern on which He made humanity. There is no changing Allah's creation. That is the true Religion, but most people do not know it. (Surat ar-Rum, 30)

The information revealed in this verse is very important, for it reveals that human beings were created only to serve Allah. In other words, serving Him is their nature. Allah "breathed His Spirit" into them and created them out of nothing, and then molded them into human form from "a drop of water" (sperm) and sent them to this world for a short time. Human beings must know that they are Allah's creatures and constantly thank Him for this. Once they understand this truth, they will live in this transient world according to His purpose: to mature and prepare themselves for their real home, the Hereafter. This manner of living accords with human nature.

It is revealed in Surat ar-Rum 30 that humanity's only purpose

is to serve Allah, yet most people are unaware of this great truth. Another verse tells us that a person's self causes him to forget that he is one of Allah's creations and the clear truth that Allah exists. For this reason, most people need someone else to guide them to the awareness of Allah's existence, to show them that they were created, and therefore are responsible to our Creator:

Does not humanity see that We created him from a drop? Yet there he is, an open antagonist! He makes likenesses of Us and forgets his own creation, asking: "Who will give life to bones when they are decayed?" Say: "He Who made them in the first place will bring them back to life. He has total knowledge of each created thing." (Surah Ya Sin, 77-79)

One's self often forgets that human beings are created by Allah. When people forget this, selfish ambition and passions begin to present them with new false deities to serve, whether animate or inanimate, besides the Creator Who **"fashioned [him] into a man"** (Surat al-Kahf, 37). They seek to please those deities, look to them for assistance, and start to love and fear them. However, these self-made deities are actually weak and powerless "servants," just like the people who created them. Unable to see this truth, they follow them and turn their backs on Allah. The Qur'an describes this total lack of gratitude:

Curse humanity for his ingratitude! From what thing did He create him? From a drop of sperm He created him and proportioned him. (Surah 'Abasa , 17-19)

Naturally, a society made up of such individuals is totally cut off from true religion and regards Allah as **"something to cast disdainfully"** behind its backs (Surah Hud, 92). Such a society develops a "herd psychology" that strengthens the already existing

rejection of Allah. Since it knows nothing about Allah and the Hereafter, the Qur'an calls it an "ignorant society." No matter how many brilliant people it has in physics, history, biology, and other similar sciences, they do not have the conscious intelligence to recognize Allah.

Moreover, members of such a society adopt false guides. Not knowing Allah properly, they follow other paths and gradually become dependent on other powerless servants like themselves, follow their examples, and accept their words and actions as the truth.

Finally, such a society adopts a system that gradually blinds it to reality and blocks its intelligence and conscience. As a result, it cannot save itself. Its members cannot understand that Allah exists and will hold them accountable on the Day of Judgment. This closed system will last until Allah sends a guide to lead them to the truth:

The People of the Book who do not believe and the idolaters will not be cut off until the Clear Sign came to them: A messenger from Allah reciting purified texts. (Surat al-Bayyina, 1-2)

SELECTING A MESSENGER

As we stated earlier, this type of society cannot recognize Allah or see the truth unaided. But in His merciful compassion, Allah sends envoys to warn them about their mistakes and to teach them the truth about Himself, the Hereafter, and the meaning of life. In the Qur'an, these envoys are called "messengers" (sing.: *rasul*; pl. *rusul* [one who is sent]). The Qur'an tells us that a messenger has been sent to every society:

We sent a messenger to every people, saying: "Worship Allah and keep clear of all false deities." Among them were some

whom Allah guided; others received the misguidance they deserved. Travel throughout the land and see the final fate of the unbelievers. (Surat an-Nahl, 36)

A messenger always belongs to a society that does not know Allah, but differs markedly from the other inhabitants. For example, he is not affected by the general moral degeneration, since he has a subtle conscience and is honest and wise. At a certain time in his life, he begins his duty as a messenger as Allah directs. Sometimes Allah puts it into his heart something that enables him to know of His existence and to realize how depraved his society is and sometimes this fact is revealed to him through revelation. This is what happened to Ibrahim (as):

Remember when Ibrahim said to his father Azar: "Do you take idols as deities? I see that you and your people are clearly misguided." Because of that, We showed Ibrahim the dominions of the heavens and Earth so that he might be one of the people of certainty. When night covered him, he saw a star and said: "This is my Lord." Then when it set, he said: "I do not love what sets." Then when he saw the moon come up, he said: "This is my Lord." Then when it set, he said: "If my Lord does not guide me, I will be one of the misguided people." Then when he saw the sun come up, he said, "This is my Lord. This is greater." Then when it set, he said: "My people, I am free of what you associate with Allah. I have turned my face to Him Who brought the heavens and Earth into being, a pure natural believer. I am not one of the idolaters." His people argued with him. He said: "Are you arguing with me about Allah when He has guided me? I have no fear of any partner you ascribe to Him, unless my Lord should will such a thing to happen. My Lord encompasses

all things in His knowledge, so will you not pay heed?"
(Surat al-An'am, 74-80)

This is the argument We gave to Ibrahim against his people. We raise in rank anyone We will. Your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. (Surat al-An'am, 83)

The Qur'an tells us that Allah showed Ibrahim (as) all the proofs for His existence. This shows us that Allah's inspiration made Ibrahim (as) aware of his society's depravity and worship of other deities besides Allah. He was able to understand Allah's existence clearly only because Allah chose him.

So, being chosen and instructed by Allah is common to all messengers. Allah reveals this truth to Musa (as):

Has the story of Musa not reached you? When he saw a fire and said to his family, "Wait here. I can make out a fire. Maybe I will bring you a brand from it or will find guidance there." When he reached it, a voice called out: "Musa! I am your Lord. Take off your sandals, for you are in the holy valley of Tuwa. I have chosen you, so listen well to what is revealed. I am Allah. There is no deity but Me, so worship Me and perform prayer in order to remember Me. The Hour is coming, but I have concealed it so that every self can be repaid for its efforts. Do not let those who have no faith in it and follow their whims and desires debar you from it, or you will be destroyed." (Surah Ta Ha, 9-16)

In short, a messenger is an individual whom Allah has selected, one who is different from his compatriots, and one who has (with Allah's help) reached an understanding on his own of Allah's existence and that of the Hereafter. But this is only the first stage of his mission. After this, it becomes his responsibility to teach his compa-

trials about the great truth he has come to understand and to invite them to follow His way:

O messenger, transmit what has been sent down to you from your Lord. If you do not do it, you will not have transmitted His Message... (Surat al-Ma'ida, 67)

This is a very difficult task, because often just a few people come to believe in the messenger; the rest become hostile to him.

Those Who Believe in the Messenger

When we look at the Qur'an's accounts of the messengers, we see that very few people in a society that does not know Allah listen to the messenger and accept what he says. This is because he calls people to renounce many of their values, reject their false deities, and serve only Allah. Most people in such a society cannot grasp these new ideas, because they are diametrically opposed to their traditional belief systems. In addition, this new religion clashes with their own interests and so, naturally, they refuse to accept it. For this reason, only a few of them who have the intelligence to transcend their society's strong allures and the will to practice what they have learned will believe in and follow the messengers. For this reason, the Qur'an calls them "believers" (*mu'minun*).

Believers are very special individuals. Their attitudes toward the world and their reactions to events are very different from that of their contemporaries. They do not direct their lives according to their society's guidelines; rather, they take their cue from Allah's revelation and His messenger's teachings and behavior. By doing so, they acquire an outstanding moral character that stands in stark contrast to that of the people around them. They are respectful of, as well as loving and loyal to, the messenger. The Qur'an relates in detail their moral qualities, attachment to Allah, and behavior toward

the messengers.

The Qur'an reveals another characteristic belonging to this group of people in its account of Musa (as) and the Companions of the Cave:

No one believed in Musa except for some scions of his people, out of fear that Pharaoh and the elders would persecute them. Pharaoh was high and mighty in the land. He was one of the profligate. (Surah Yunus, 83)

Here, Allah reveals that those who followed Musa (as) were *young*. This is because young people are less likely to be attracted by the allures of their society than older individuals. Thus, they are more likely to disavow their non-Qur'anic system and accept the truth. The believers mentioned in Surat al-Kahf, also have the same quality. Here are the relevant verses:

We will relate their story to you with truth. They were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance. We fortified their hearts when they stood up and said: "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and Earth, and We will not call on any deity apart from Him. We would, in that case, have uttered an abomination. Our people have taken deities apart from Him. Why do they not produce a clear authority concerning them? Who could do greater wrong than someone who invents a lie against Allah?" (Surat al-Kahf, 13-15)

But as we explained earlier, those who understand that their society has gone astray and seek to rectify this by putting themselves under the messenger's guidance are few in number.

As we saw above in the verses of Surat al-An'am dealing with Ibrahim (as), many who do not believe in Allah's messenger respond

to him with hostility. The wealthy, the powerful, and those who are opposed to any change in the established order are particularly hostile. It is to these arrogant people who persist in their rejection of Him that Allah sends messengers. Allah said to Musa (as):

Go to Pharaoh. He has overstepped the bounds. (Surah Ta Ha, 24)

The Leaders of Ignorant Society

In a society of believers, people do not judge others on the basis of family connections, physical beauty, or wealth, and the citizens are loved and respected because of their superior moral character. This society appreciates, loves, and respects those of its people who have superior moral qualities, such as godliness, honesty, trustworthiness, mercy, respect and love for others, and self-sacrifice. As these can be achieved only by submitting to Allah, those entrusted with power and authority in a believing society possess these qualities to the highest degree.

However, the situation in a society that does not know Allah is just the reverse: the moral values listed above have little importance, and the people know nothing of the Qur'an's moral teachings and so exaggerate the importance of material things. For example, wealth is the highest value, for this is what makes a person important. In other words, money is their greatest idol. For this reason, the people of such a society believe that "everyone has his or her price."

Therefore, the rich can reach the highest levels by "buying" influential or powerful people. When money is the most valuable thing, people who have it enjoy a strange kind of respect and admiration that gradually helps them to acquire the most power and authority. They form their society's various elites and thus devise its norms and expectations. Most people accept their decisions and ad-

mire their lifestyles, behaviors, and moral character. In other words, they become "fashionable."

The Qur'an often mentions the leaders of such societies. They are called "the ruling circle of those who did not believe" and "the affluent people." They vigorously oppose the messenger's message, urge others not to listen to him, and try to incite hostility toward him. The Qur'an describes this unchanging rule:

We never sent a warner into any city without the affluent people in it saying: "We reject what you have been sent with." They also said: "We have more wealth and children. We are not going to be punished." (Surah Saba', 34-35)

WHAT MESSENGERS DESIRE: FAITH AND OBEDIENCE TO ALLAH

All messengers bring the same message from Allah: The people must believe in Allah as the only Lord and, just as importantly, they must respect, fear, and obey Him. This unchanging message is seen in Surat ash-Shu'ara':

Nuh's people denied the messengers. When their brother Nuh said to them: "Will you not guard against evil? I am a faithful messenger to you, so have respect and fear of Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 105-109)

The 'Ad people denied the messengers when their brother Hud said to them: "Will you not guard against evil? I am a faithful messenger to you, so have respect and fear of Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 123-127)

The Thamud people denied the messengers, when their brother Salih said to them: "Will you not guard against evil? I am a faithful messenger to you, so have respect and fear of Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 141-145)

Lut's people denied the messengers, when their brother Lut said to them: "Will you not guard against evil? I am a faithful messenger to you. So have respect and fear of Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 160-164)

The Companions of the Thicket denied the messengers, when Shu'ayb said to them: "Will you not guard against evil? I am a faithful messenger to you. So have respect and fear of Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 176-180)

Every other message of the messengers found in the Qur'an is similar. For example:

When 'Isa came with the clear signs, he said: "I have come to you with Wisdom and to clarify for you some of the things about which you have differed. Therefore, have respect and fear of Allah, and obey me. Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path." (Surat az-Zukhruf, 63-64)

Harun had earlier said to them: "My people, it is just a trial for you. Your Lord is the All-Merciful, so follow me and obey my command." (Surah Ta Ha, 90)

Say: "Obey Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad). Then if they turn away, he is only responsible for what he is charged with, and you are responsible for what you are charged with. If you obey him, you will be guided. The Messenger is only responsible for the [message's] clear transmission." (Surat an-Nur, 54)

As we can see, all of Allah's messengers invite their people to have faith in Allah and serve Him. They warn them about the Hereafter, inform them that this world is transient, and that they will be rewarded in the Hereafter for what they did here. In addition, they ask for the people's obedience, for the Qur'an says: **"If you obey him, you will be guided"** (Surat an-Nur, 54). They make this request because only His messengers can lead their people to the truth by calling upon them to live according to Allah's religion.

But the messenger's leading opponents do not accept this, because they have made everyone dependent on them and their material wealth. However, the messengers proclaim that there is no other deity and lord (in the sense of teacher, guide, and judge) besides Allah, and that He has commanded everyone to obey them. When the people accept this, they become believers in Allah and abandon whatever else they had been worshipping. As this signifies the end of the leaders' power and authority, they become the messengers' greatest opponents. They also reject the messengers out of envy, for they think that one of their own should have been selected for this honor.

WHY THE MESSENGERS ARE OPPOSED

The leaders set traps for a messenger and his followers so that the status quo will not be upset. Messengers summon their people to serve only Allah. When they begin to do so, the Qur'anic under-

standing of justice and morality begin to take hold in society. The resulting honesty, sincerity, self-sacrifice, industriousness, and similar moral qualities will upset those who are corrupt and unjust, as well as those who exploit others to gain rank and position. It will also make those who have adopted a shameless, immoral lifestyle and who transgress the limits that Allah has set uncomfortable.

Those who control others by making them dependent upon their wealth, rank, and position fear that they will lose the people's obedience, for now they will listen only to the messenger, submit themselves to Allah, and act according to the Qur'anic teachings and norms. These are the genuine people who follow the Qur'anic teachings of what is lawful and unlawful. In other words, they do not steal or engage in corruption, defend the poor and the orphaned. Therefore, they ignore their unbelieving society's traditional norms.

Something else that upsets the society's leaders is that, despite their power, respectability, and authority, a person who is not one of them has been accepted and is now exposing their own falsehoods and those of their system by his religious and moral way of life. As we stated earlier, these leaders cannot tolerate even the idea that a messenger could get the better of them.

Given that Allah's messengers are the wisest and morally the purest individuals in the world, the leading unbelievers are jealous of them and try to embarrass them in the eyes of society. For example, the Makkan unbelievers leveled many false accusations against our Prophet (saas), hoping that their mocking words and insults would debase one so high in Allah's sight in the believers' eyes. But they failed, for such attempts only increased the believers' zeal and strengthened their unity:

Those who do not believe say: "This is nothing but a lie he has invented, and other people have helped him to do it."

They have brought injustice and falsehood. They say: "It is myths of previous peoples that he has had transcribed and that are read out to him in the morning and the evening." Say: "The One Who sent it down is He Who knows all of the hidden secrets in the heavens and Earth. He is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Surat al-Furqan, 4-6)

Another reason why the leaders react against a messenger is because according to their value judgments they cannot tolerate a leader that does not belong to their group.

These Leaders Cannot Appreciate What Messengers Are

The major characteristic of unbelievers, especially of their leaders, is that they cannot evaluate a situation according to the dictates of their conscience. The Qur'an makes this point many times. One of the clearest indications of this is their inability to understand what a messenger is: an envoy of Allah sent to direct a society in His way. This is certainly an important responsibility, but the leaders cannot grasp this subtlety and so regard a messenger as an ordinary individual. Naturally, they evaluate his message in terms of their own traditions and rules, which are not based upon the Qur'an.

One of the strictest rules and traditions concerns a leader's qualifications. As a general rule, one who wants to lead a society must have certain material qualifications: a good lineage or wealth. In other words, he must be a member of the elite.

Unbelievers interpret a messenger's message according to this basic logic. They think that "if Allah is to have a messenger," he must be someone from their group: wealthy or well known. They believe that someone who does not come from their social class cannot be Allah's messenger and, therefore, cannot be a leader. The Qur'an gives us an example of this way of thinking in its account of Talut:

Their Prophet said to them: "Allah has appointed Talut to be your king." They asked: "How can he have kingship over us when we have much more right to kingship than he does? He does not even have much wealth!" He said: "Allah has chosen him over you and favored him greatly in knowledge and physical strength. Allah gives kingship to anyone He wills. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing." (Surat al-Baqara, 247)

This superficial and flawed way of thinking is quite widespread among leaders. This explains why the Makkan elite rejected Prophet Muhammad's (saas) mission. As the Qur'an says, they turned their faces and asked: **"Has the Reminder been sent down to him out of all of us?"** (Surah Sâd, 8). Another verse describes their psychology:

But when the truth came to them, they said: "This is magic and we reject it." They ask: "Why was this Qur'an not sent down to one of the great men of the two cities?" (Surat az-Zukhruf, 30-31)

Allah answers this question in the next verse:

Is it, then, they who allocate the mercy of your Lord?... (Surat az-Zukhruf, 32)

According to the leaders' twisted way of thinking, that the messenger is chosen by Allah is not enough. According to them, such a person must have great material wealth so that he will be obeyed. The Qur'an describes what these leaders expect a messenger to be:

We have provided throughout this Qur'an all kinds of examples for people, but most people spurn anything but unbelief. They say: "We will not believe you until you make a spring gush out from the ground for us; or have a garden of

dates and grapes through which you make rivers come pouring; or make the sky, as you claim, fall down on us in lumps; or bring Allah and the angels here as a guarantee; or possess a house built out of gleaming gold; or ascend up into heaven – and even then we will not believe in your ascent unless you bring us down a book to read!" Say: "Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a human messenger?" (Surat al-Isra', 89-93)

However, believers attach themselves to a messenger not because of his wealth but because Allah has chosen him. They obey him because of their belief and closeness to Allah. Unbelievers cannot appreciate this, for they think that people obey the messengers because of their wealth. So, this is one of the reasons why they attack a messenger and believers, and initiate a struggle. A striking example of this can be seen in the struggle between Musa (as) and Pharaoh.

Musa (as) and Pharaoh

The Qur'an tells us that Pharaoh was an oppressor who ruled the Egyptians with his material and military might. He especially oppressed and tortured the Israelites, who were forced to work as slaves in Egypt. The Qur'an describes his rule:

Pharaoh exalted himself arrogantly in the land and divided its people into camps, oppressing one group of them by slaughtering their sons and letting their women live. He was one of the corrupters. (Surat al-Qasas, 4)

Allah sent Musa (as) as a messenger to save the Israelites from Pharaoh's cruelty and to lead them to the right path. Musa (as) asked Pharaoh for permission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, but

Pharaoh refused because it would cast a shadow on his power. He claimed to be the "lord of all Egypt." He oppressed the people and made them believe that his ideas were the only right ones:

... "I only show you what I see myself, and I only guide you to the path of rectitude." (Surah Ghafir, 29)

For this reason, Pharaoh could not allow Musa (as) to become the Israelites' leader. Considering himself the owner of Egypt, he could not imagine that Musa (as), who had no material wealth, could be their leader.

Pharaoh was jealous of Musa (as) and nursed a deep hatred for him. Displaying his superior wealth, power, and possessions, he tried to belittle Allah's messenger with deceptive words:

Pharaoh called to his people, saying: "My people, does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me? Do not all these rivers flow under my control? Do you not then see? Am I not better than this man who is contemptible and can scarcely make anything clear? Why have gold bracelets not been put upon his arms, and why is there not a train of angels accompanying him?" In that way, he swayed his people and they succumbed to him. They were a people who had gone astray. (Surat az-Zukhruf, 51-54)

As we see, Pharaoh presented himself as the "lord of Egypt." But Musa (as) said that Allah was the "Lord of everything on Earth, in the heavens and in between," which of course included Egypt, and this upset Pharaoh. The Qur'an relates this conversation:

Pharaoh asked: "What is the Lord of all the worlds?" He [Musa] replied: "The Lord of the heavens and Earth and everything between them, if you knew for sure." He [Pharaoh] said to those around him: "Are you listening?" He

[Musa] said: "Your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers, the previous peoples." He [Pharaoh] said: "This Messenger, who has been sent to you, is mad." He [Musa] replied: "The Lord of the East and the West and everything between them, if you used your intellect." He [Pharaoh] said: "If you take any deity other than me, I will certainly throw you into prison." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 23-29)

Pharaoh was hostile to Musa (as) because the truths he told threatened his kingdom's order. Pharaoh knew that Allah existed, and said as much:

... "Council, I do not know of any other deity for you apart from me. Haman, kindle a fire for me over the clay and build me a lofty tower so that, perhaps, I may be able to climb up to Musa's god! I consider him a blatant liar." (Surat al-Qasas, 38)

Pharaoh's words betray a general characteristic of those who lead the forces of opposition against Allah's messengers: their distorted belief in Allah. For this reason, they do not recognize that they owe obedience to His messengers. When a messenger tells them that their society's status quo has become corrupt and asks them to give up their dishonest profits and become his followers, these arrogant leaders, who have been spoiled by their blessings, respond with anger and hostility.

In the Qur'an, Allah informs us of their state and states that He will choose His messengers:

And likewise in every city, We set up its greatest wrongdoers to plot in it. They plot against themselves alone, but they are not aware of it. When a sign comes to them, they say: "We will not believe until we have been given the same as the

messengers of Allah were given." Allah knows best where to place His message. Debasement in the sight of Allah and a severe punishment will strike those who did wrong for the plots that they concocted. (Surat al-An'am, 123-124)

The unbelieving leaders' hostility toward a messenger soon becomes evident.

TRAPS SET FOR THE MESSENGERS

Many accounts of the messengers relate the opposition, assaults, plots, and accusations that the unbelievers launch against them. No messenger has ever been exempted from such abuse.

But there is an interesting aspect to this abuse: The leaders never deny Allah's existence and thus reject His ordinances; on the contrary, they claim that they have the right belief in Allah, and that the messenger is no more than an imposter in search of worldly gain. They say that his followers are "deceived" and "bewitched," and organize themselves to "save society from him." They think that their own traditional social organization is right and that this "upstart" is trying to upset it for his own gain.

The general spiritual condition of the people who vilify these superior, intelligent, worthy, and highly moral individuals is certainly in a state of decay. We can understand from the Qur'anic accounts that those who set traps for the messengers are those who could easily commit murder. For example, the Qur'an tells us about Yusuf's (as) brothers, who planned to kill him out of jealousy:

[Yusuf's brothers said:] "Kill Yusuf or expel him to some land so that your father will look to you alone, and then you can be people who do right." (Surah Yusuf, 9)

Those who set the trap claim to be good people. In fact, this is a

major ploy that the unbelievers use to "prove" that they are working for the good of society. Pharaoh tried to justify threatening Musa (as) with death because he did not want to impugn religion and to unleash chaos. In spite of his cruelty and oppression, he proclaimed himself to be the protector of society's values. The Qur'an reports Pharaoh's words:

Pharaoh said: "Let me kill Musa, and let him call upon his Lord. I am afraid that he may change your religion and bring about corruption in the land." (Surah Ghafir, 26)

In other words, Pharaoh supposedly wanted to save the people from Musa (as). This disingenuousness is a common characteristic of all unbelievers. The Qur'an relates the following conversation between Nuh (as) and the leaders of his people:

The ruling circle of his people – those who did not believe and denied the encounter of the Hereafter and to whom We had given opulence in this world – said: "This is nothing but a human being like yourselves, who eats what you eat and drinks what you drink. If you were to obey a human being like yourselves, you would, in that case, definitely be the losers. Does he promise you that when you have died and become dust and bones you will be brought forth again? What you have been promised is sheer nonsense! What is there but our life in this world? We die and we live, and we will not be raised again. What is he but a man who has invented a lie against Allah? We do not believe in him." (Surat al-Muminun, 33-38)

Such unbelieving leaders spread amazing propaganda against the messengers. They deny one of religion's most important foundations: the existence of the Hereafter. They do not admit that they re-

ject Allah, but portray the messengers as "inventors of lies in His name and exploiters of religion." Another of their claims is that the messengers are just normal people who eat and drink like everyone else. Therefore, there is no advantage in following them. But this is nonsense, because a messenger is a human being who lives like everyone else – the only difference is that Allah has chosen him and led him to the truth. For this reason, those who obey a messenger have chosen to follow a guide to the truth.

The Qur'an tells us that people expect a messenger to be an extraordinary individual, but that this is a mistake:

Nothing prevents people from believing when guidance comes to them, but the fact that they ask: "Has Allah sent a human being as messenger?" Say: "If there had been angels on Earth going about in peace, We would have sent down to them an angel from heaven as a messenger." (Surat al-Isra', 94-95)

The main reason why unbelievers oppose the messengers is not, as they claim, because they want to protect the people from "harmful" ideas. Rather, it is because the leaders seek only their own advantage and thus are hostile to a messenger, who is viewed as a threat to these advantages. Therefore, the leading unbelievers think they must stop a messenger from communicating his message.

The first thing they do is spread negative propaganda about the messenger and his message. The Qur'an relates some classic accusations. But it is useful here to recall an important point: No matter what the unbelievers do to disparage a messenger and his followers, and no matter what accusations they allege, they will fail. Contrary to what they expect, their insults, accusations, and calumnies will have no ill effect on the believers, who are aware that they will be rewarded in this life and the Hereafter for enduring such things pa-

tiently, reacting to them properly, and holding fast to His way and religious morality.

More False Accusations

Believers know that all such accusations made against them are gossip and slander created by Allah to test them:

You will be tested in your wealth and in yourselves, and you will hear many abusive words from those given the Book before you and from the idolaters. But if you are steadfast and guard against evil, that is the most resolute course to take. (Surah Al 'Imran, 186)

Allah has promised that these tests will purify those who endure them in this world. For example, the unbelievers tried to oppress Musa (as) with accusations and insults, but Allah exonerated him:

O you who believe! Do not be like those who abused Musa. Allah absolved him of what they said, and he was highly honored in Allah's sight. (Surat al-Ahzab, 69)

In the same way, they leveled serious accusations against Yusuf (as) with regard to his chastity. Although everyone knew that he had preserved his chastity, they nonetheless threw him into prison:

Then, after they had seen the signs, they thought that they should still imprison him for a time. (Surah Yusuf, 35)

Although Yusuf (as) has committed no crime, he spent years in prison. Later on, the truth came out and he was cleared:

He [the King] asked [the women]: "What was this past affair of yours when you solicited Yusuf?" Then they said: "Allah forbid! We know no bad of him." The governor's wife then said: "The truth has now emerged. Indeed, I tried to seduce

him then and he has simply told the honest truth." [Then Yusuf said:] "In this way, he [the governor] may know at last that I did not dishonor him behind his back and that Allah most surely does not guide the deviousness of the dishonorable." (Surah Yusuf, 51-52)

After his innocence became known, Yusuf (as) won the king's confidence, who gave him authority and made him a leader of the people:

He [Yusuf] said: "Entrust the treasures of the land to me. In truth, I am a knowing guardian." And thus We established Yusuf in the land so he could live in any place he pleased. We grant Our grace to anyone We will, and We do not allow to go to waste the wage of any people who do good. (Surah Yusuf, 55-56)

The messengers are not concerned with being exonerated in the eyes of others. It is enough for them that All-Knowing Allah knows what they are doing and what is in their hearts. But the Qur'an tells us that the pangs of Hell await those who make false accusations against the messengers and believers:

Those who accuse chaste believing women, unaware [of the evil], are cursed both in this world and the Hereafter, and will have a terrible punishment on the Day when their tongues, hands, and feet will testify against them about what they were doing. On that Day, Allah will pay them in full what is due to them, and they will know that Allah is the Clear Truth. (Surat an-Nur, 23-25)

Another verse tells us what will happen to those who accuse believing men and women of committing sins, which they did not :

And those who abuse believing men and women when they

have not merited it, [will] bear the weight of slander and clear wrongdoing. (Surat al-Ahzab, 58)

Now we will examine the accusations made against the messengers, as well as the methods used to sully their characters.

The accusation that messengers seek their own advantage

The most frequent accusation made by the unbelievers' leaders is that the messenger does not believe in what he proclaims, but rather is only seeking his own advantage and personal gain. Furthermore, they claim that the messenger's "thirst for power" underlies his demand to be obeyed. For example, Pharaoh and his circle claimed that Musa (as) was not interested in calling people to religion; all he wanted was to "gain greatness in the land":

They said: "Have you come to us to turn us from what we found our fathers doing and to gain greatness in the land? We do not believe you." (Surah Yunus, 78)

Nuh's (as) people made the very same accusation:

We sent Nuh to his people, and he said: "My people, worship Allah. You have no deity other than Him. So will you not guard against evil?" The ruling circle of his unbelieving people said: "This is nothing but a human being like yourselves who simply wants to gain ascendancy over you. If Allah had wanted, He would have sent down angels. We never heard of anything like this among our ancestors, the earlier peoples." (Surat al-Muminun, 23-24)

These verses show that the unbelievers think that the messengers are ordinary people like themselves. All messengers, without exception, call their people to obey them – but only for the sake of

gaining Allah's approval. Each messenger and those who believe in and obey him are Allah's servants. Thus, when a messenger calls people to obey him, he is actually calling them to serve Allah:

It is not right for any human being that Allah should give him the Book and Judgment and Prophethood, and then that he should say to people: "Worship me rather than Allah." Rather he will say: "Be people of the Lord, because of your knowledge of the Book and because you study." He would never command you to take the angels and the prophets as Lords. Would He command you to abandon belief after being Muslim? (Surah Al 'Imran, 79-80)

However, as we have seen, Pharaoh claimed just the opposite: He and others like him claimed to be "gods." When they met a messenger like Musa (as), they thought he wanted to make the people follow him so that he could pursue his own gain. For them, a messenger was a "rival" whose purpose was to overthrow the traditional order.

The accusation that messengers are crazy

This is another frequent accusation, one that has been leveled against nearly all of the messengers. The Qur'an often refers to this. For example, Nuh (as) was called a "madman":

"He is nothing but a man possessed, so wait a while and see what happens to him." (Surat al-Muminun, 25)

Before them, the people of Nuh denied the truth. They denied Our servant, saying: "He is madman," and he was driven away with jeers. (Surat al-Qamar, 9)

The same accusation was made against Prophet Muhammad (saas):

They say: "You, to whom the Reminder has been sent down, are clearly crazy. Why do you not bring angels to us if you are telling the truth?" (Surat al-Hijr, 6-7)

Do they not ponder these words? Has anything come to them that did not come to their ancestors, the previous peoples? Or is it that they do not recognize their messenger and, therefore, do not acknowledge him? Or do they say: "He is a man possessed" when he has brought the truth to them? But most of them hate the truth. (Surat al-Muminun, 68-70)

The same slander was directed against Musa (as):

He [Pharaoh] said: "This messenger, who has been sent to you, is crazy." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 27)

Allah tells us that all peoples tend to make false accusations against the messengers sent to them:

Those who do not believe ask: "Shall we point out to you a man who will tell you that when you have completely disintegrated you will then be recreated all anew? Has he invented a lie against Allah, or is he possessed?" No indeed! Those who do not believe in the Hereafter are in punishment and deeply misguided. (Surah Saba', 7-8)

How shall they be reminded when a clear messenger has already come to them? But then they turned away from him and said: "He is an instructed madman!" (Surat ad-Dukhan, 13-14)

The main reason why the unbelievers' leaders always make such accusations is because they want to blacken the messengers' reputations. But there is also a second reason: They cannot understand how a messenger can openly challenge the people, how he can risk his own life and oppose powerful leaders. While personal gain

is their first criterion, a messenger gives up his personal advantage to deliver Allah's message. In the leaders' eyes, such behavior is totally opposed to worldly gain and is, therefore, a type of madness.

However, by forgoing his advantage, a messenger gains Allah's approval and mercy, as well as the promise of Paradise, which nothing else can equal in value. But unbelievers cannot grasp this.

The accusation that messengers are magicians

The Qur'an also informs us that since these leaders cannot understand how a messenger can influence the people, they attribute magical powers to him. But such influence has nothing to do with magic, for believers know that he is Allah's messenger and guides them according to His ordinances. As a result, they are loyal to him and feel great love and respect for him.

This is difficult for the unbelievers' leaders to understand, for they consider the messenger's message as nothing **"but the myths of previous peoples"** (Surat al-Muminun, 83). However, believers are deeply attached to these truths, which the unbelievers call "myths." The unbelievers try to dismiss such influence on the people as sorcery, brainwashing, and casting spells:

Do people find it so surprising that We should reveal to a man among them: "Warn humanity and give good news to those who believe that they are on a sure footing with their Lord?" The unbelievers exclaim: "This is downright magic!" (Surah Yunus, 2)

They are surprised that a warner should come to them from among themselves. The unbelievers say: "This is a lying magician. Has he turned all the deities into One God? That is truly astonishing!" (Surah Sâd, 4-5)

They made the same accusation against Musa (as):

And also in Musa, when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority. But he turned away with his forces, saying: "A magician or a madman!" (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 38-39)

The ruling circle of Pharaoh's people said: "This is certainly a skilled magician." (Surat al-A'raf, 109)

We sent Musa with Our signs and clear authority to Pharaoh, Haman, and Qarun. But they said: "A lying magician." (Surah Ghafir, 23-24)

The Qur'an tells us that this accusation has become a tradition: **Similarly, no messenger came to those before them without them exclaiming: "A magician or a madman!" Did they bequeath this to each other? Indeed, they are an unbridled people. (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 52-53)**

The accusation that messengers are liars

Along with the above accusations, the Qur'an also mentions another: that the messenger is a liar. One of the unbelieving leaders' main worries is that the people will accept the truth of the messenger's message and adopt the moral system to which he is calling them. If this happened, their own false systems, as well as their power and authority, would crumble and collapse.

The accusations mentioned above are designed to show that the messenger's message is not true. They seek to camouflage the fact that a messenger is Allah's messenger and to convince their people that what he says is his own invention. Otherwise, no one would openly show hostility toward a messenger out of fear of opposing Allah's messenger.

The Qur'an tells us of this accusation:

The ruling circle of those of his [Hud's] unbelieving people said: "We consider you a fool and think you are a liar." (Surat al-A'raf, 66)

The ruling circle of those of his [Nuh's] unbelieving people said: "We see you as no more than a human being like ourselves. We do not see anyone but the lowest of us following you, unthinkingly. We do not see you as superior to us. On the contrary, we consider you to be liars." (Surah Hud, 27)

The Thamud people denied the warnings. They said: "Are we to follow a human being, one of us? Then we would truly be misguided, quite insane! Has the Reminder been given to him from among all of us? No indeed! He is an impudent liar." (Surat al-Qamar, 23-25)

There are other accusations as well, such as ridiculing and belittling the messengers: **"We sent messengers before you among the disparate groups of previous peoples. No messenger came to them without their mocking him"** (Surat al-Hijr, 10-11). They also accuse messengers and their followers of "heresy" and even of "unchastity." Yusuf (as) and Maryam were both accused of unchastity.

But such accusations can never intimidate a messenger and his followers, for their basic goal is to gain Allah's approval and mercy and to obtain the promise of Paradise. For this reason, obstacles along the way never deter believers or weaken their resolve. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us about the difficulties that believers will face.

Believers know that they will be abused verbally:

You will be tested in your wealth and in yourselves, and you will hear many abusive words from those given the Book before you and from those who are idolaters. But if you are

steadfast and guard against evil, that is the most resolute course to take. (Surah Al 'Imran, 186)

The messenger and his followers pay no attention to these false accusations and slander, for they are those **"who strive in the way of Allah and do not fear the blame of any censurer"** (Surat al-Ma'ida, 54).

In time, the leading unbelievers will certainly notice that the accusations made against the messenger and his followers have not achieved the desired goal. In this case, their classic maneuver is to put pressure on the messenger.

Actual Assaults against Messengers

When a messenger tells the people about Allah's religion, the unbelievers' leaders react more and more ferociously. When they see the true religion continue to spread despite all of their accusations and calumnies, they resort to what they consider to be more "effective," such as setting traps.

The Qur'an tells us about such a plot:

When those who do not believe were plotting against you to imprison, kill, or expel you: they were plotting and Allah was plotting, but Allah is the Best of Plotters. (Surat al-Anfal, 30)

The unbelievers' goal is to have the messenger arrested, murdered, or expelled. The word "plot" here is thought-provoking: Instead of confronting a messenger openly, the unbelievers resort to plots in an attempt to achieve the above-mentioned goal. But as the verse says, their plots can never harm a messenger, for Allah will protect His messenger until his work is completed. The Qur'an mentions that nearly all of the messengers were threatened with death, prison,

or torture and that the unbelievers' threats often turned into actual assaults.

Attempts to exile

The Qur'an states that exile is one of the methods used by unbelievers to silence the messengers. They think scattering a messenger and his followers by driving them away from their homes will cause them to become powerless and that this will enable them to rid themselves of these people. For example, they tried to exile Lut (as) and his family because they lived pure and honest lives among their corrupt people. The Qur'an relates how they ridiculed Lut's (as) message:

The only response of his people was to exclaim: "Drive Lut's family out of your city! They are people who keep themselves pure!" (Surat an-Naml, 56)

Lut (as) urged his people to avoid immorality, to stay within the limits set by Allah, and to abandon their current immoral and shameful behavior. This is why they wanted to exile him and his family. But at Allah's command, as soon as Lut (as) left his city it was destroyed by a catastrophe, and the unbelievers' trap was neutralized:

When Our command came, We turned their cities upside down and rained down upon them stones of hard baked clay piled on top of one another in layers, each one earmarked by your Lord. And they are never far from the wrongdoers. (Surah Hud, 82-83)

Our Prophet (saas) and the believers were banished from their towns by their own people and forced to migrate elsewhere because they proclaimed Allah's existence and unity, invited people to ac-

cept the Qur'an, and prohibited them from doing evil. In one verse, Allah tells us that the messengers were banished from their lands, but that those who exiled them were eventually destroyed:

How many cities We have destroyed, greater in strength than your city that has driven you out, and there was no one to help them. (Surah Muhammad, 13)

This is one of Allah's eternal laws. Those who exile people from their homes because of their religion cannot remain there themselves for long. The unbelievers' traps are always foiled. After Prophet Muhammad (saas) was forced to leave Makkah, he returned years later in the company of thousands of believers and established his rule over the unbelievers. To the unbelievers' surprise, the Muslims were neither divided nor scattered; rather, they were stronger and more united and, with Allah's permission, they defeated the unbelievers. This shows that alliances formed against the believers will never succeed.

Attempts to arrest and imprison the messengers

One method of intimidation used by the unbelievers' leaders is to arrest and imprison the messengers in an attempt to silence them and prevent them from proclaiming His way. In fact, these leaders want to totally eradicate the messengers and all other believers. The very existence of such people makes them extremely anxious and uncomfortable. For this reason, they spare no effort or expense to silence the messengers in order to protect their property and to perpetuate the status quo.

For example, Pharaoh threatened Musa (as) with prison when the latter did not offer his obedience, out of the mistaken belief that this was the best way to control him. The Qur'an relates this threat:

He [Pharaoh] said: "If you take any deity other than me, I will certainly throw you into prison." (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 29)

When we look at Islamic history, those who strived in His way were constantly subjected to pressure, cruelty, and interference by the unbelievers. And the believers also experienced similar difficulties. Since the unbelievers always feel threatened in such circumstances, those who worked to promote His way have constantly been watched, followed, and imprisoned.

Such experiences may look extremely oppressive from the outside; however, remember that believers regard them as spiritual training, for they know that such difficulties are a source of joy and contentment, a way of purification that helps them gain Allah's approval and mercy, as well as attain the promise of Paradise. Such events allow them to come closer to Allah, to witness the Qur'an's truth and Allah's close interest in what happens to them.

The Qur'an tells us of the believers' courage:

... Say: "Call on your partner-deities. Try all of your wiles against me and grant me no reprieve. My Protector is Allah, Who sent down the Book. He takes care of the righteous." (Surat al-A'raf, 195-196)

Efforts to oppress, wear down, and frighten

In order to increase their spiritual reward, Allah tests the believers' patience, trust, and determination to remain faithful to Him. He may do this in many different ways, one of which He reveals in the Qur'an:

When you were few and oppressed in the land, afraid that the people would snatch you away, He gave you refuge, sup-

ported you with His help, and provided you with good things so that, hopefully, you would be thankful. (Surat al-Anfal, 26)

No matter how bereft and helpless believers may appear, Allah's mercy and assistance are always with them:

O you who believe! Remember Allah's blessing to you when forces came against you and We sent a wind and other forces that you could not see against them. Allah sees what you do. When they came at you from above and below, when your eyes rolled, your hearts rose to your throats, and you thought unworthy thoughts about Allah, at that point the believers were tested and severely shaken. (Surat al-Ahzab, 9-11)

In every period of history, unbelievers have always tried to intimidate believers. They always direct the brunt of their attacks against the messengers. But because believers know that all power belongs to Allah, they are not intimidated or discouraged.

When faced with these moments of difficulty, believers realize that Allah and His messengers have told them of these things beforehand, and so they do not lose their dignity or their trust; on the contrary, their trust and determination increase. The Qur'an describes the believers' determination when they confronted the Confederates:

When the believers saw the Confederates, they said: "This is what Allah and His messenger promised us. Allah and His messenger told us the truth." It only increased them in faith and submission. (Surat al-Ahzab, 22)

Attempted murder

The unbelievers' cruelest assault against these individuals of

the best and finest morality known to humanity is attempted murder. Almost every messenger has been faced with such an attempt. Sometimes these plots were successful; sometimes they were not. These unbelievers thought that killing the messengers would destroy Allah's religion and cause the believers to abandon their faith. The people's desire to stone Shu'ayb (as) to death is a striking example of the unbelievers' resentment and hostility toward those following Allah's way:

They said: "Shu'ayb, we do not understand much of what you say, and we see that you are weak among us. Were it not for your clan, we would have stoned you. We do not hold you in high esteem!" (Surah Hud, 91)

When Pharaoh and his circle were planning to kill Musa (as), Allah informed him:

A man came running from the furthest part of the city, saying: "Musa, the Council is conspiring to kill you, so leave! I am someone who brings you good advice." (Surat al-Qasas, 20)

Unbelievers also tried to kill the messengers through kidnappings and solitary confinement. Earlier, we gave the example of how Yusuf (as) was abandoned by his brothers in a well to die of exposure, hunger, and thirst. And Ibrahim's (as) people were frenzied enough to burn this blessed messenger alive after he had broken their idols. But Allah miraculously rescued him from his seemingly hopeless situation:

The only answer of his people was to say: "Kill him or burn him!" But Allah rescued him from the fire. There are certainly signs in that for people who are believers. (Surat al-'Ankabut, 24)

The Qur'an tells us that this attempt failed and that Allah protects His messengers:

... Allah will protect you from people... (Surat al-Ma'ida, 67)

Without Allah's permission, unbelievers cannot harm a believer or a messenger.

The Unbelievers' Traps Are Doomed to Fail from the Beginning

By taking a few physical measures, unbelievers think that they can silence a messenger's message. However, they never consider that Allah determines the outcome of everything and that He always helps the believers. They do their best to prevent the messenger's work, but their traps always fail and rebound upon them, no matter how well and intelligently planned they are. In the Qur'an, Allah makes the following promise:

**... Allah always confounds the schemes of the unbelievers.
(Surat al-Anfal, 18)**

**... The stratagems of the unbelievers are nothing but errors.
(Surah Ghafir, 25)**

They hatched a plot, and We hatched a plot while they were not aware. So look at the end result of all their plotting; We utterly destroyed them and their whole people! (Surat an-Naml, 50-51)

Or do they desire to dupe you? But the duped ones are the unbelievers. (Surat at-Tur, 42)

... But then, when a warner came to them it only increased their aversion, shown by their arrogance in the land and evil plotting. But evil plotting envelops only those who do it. Do

they expect anything but the pattern of previous peoples? You will not find any changing in the pattern of Allah. You will not find any alteration in the pattern of Allah. (Surah Fatir, 42-43)

Every sort of trap, wicked ruse, accusation, and plot designed against the messengers will turn into something good, for apart from Allah there is no power; He creates every trap and ensures that it will come to naught. In fact, He turns all traps to the believers' advantage and thereby harms the unbelievers, who never realize that they are also subject to His will. Without the slightest alteration, they set the traps just as Allah commands. In the same way, believers witness the failure of these traps just as Allah wills. The Qur'an tells us that the traps will only harm the unbelievers:

Those before them plotted, but all plotting belongs to Allah. He knows what each self earns, and the unbelievers will soon know who has the Ultimate Abode. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 42)

And likewise in every city We set up its greatest wrongdoers to plot in it. They plot against themselves alone, but they are not aware of it. (Surat al-An'am, 123)

The Qur'an also tells us that no matter how damaging the trap may be, it cannot overcome what Allah has willed. To the unbelievers, these plots are seen as proofs of their power. But Allah has prepared a response for these people, and He always keeps His promise. This is one of His unchanging laws:

Our Word was given before to Our servants, the messengers, that they would certainly be helped. Our army will be victorious. (Surat as-Saffat, 171-173)

We showed great kindness to Musa and Harun. We rescued them and their people from their terrible plight. We sup-

ported them, and so they were the victors. (Surat as-Saffat, 114-116)

Allah has written: "I will be victorious, I and My messengers." Allah is Most Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Mujadala, 21)

As for those who make Allah their friend, and His messenger and those who believe: It is the party of Allah that is victorious! (Surat al-Ma'ida, 56)

The lives of Allah's messengers are full of examples of victories obtained over the unbelievers' plots. For example, Pharaoh killed all male children who had been born during a particular period, took precautions, and oppressed believers, but he still could not hinder Musa (as). The people tried to burn Ibrahim (as) alive, but Allah cooled it for him so that he could survive. Yusuf's (as) brothers threw him into a well to die, but Allah rescued him and had an Egyptian king put him in charge of the nation's treasures. They tried to kill Jesus (as), but Allah raised him to heaven. Again and again He foiled their traps in the most unexpected way. Allah creates what and when He wills, and gives victory to His messengers.

Allah Knows All of Their Traps

Unbelievers, who have no knowledge of Allah's power, think that no one is aware of their traps for the messengers. Quietly and behind closed doors, they make their cruel and unjust decisions. But they are mistaken in their assumption that such secrecy hides them, for Allah knows all secrets and is aware of every detail. As the Qur'an says:

Do you not see that Allah knows what is in the heavens and on Earth? Three men cannot confer together secretly without

Him being the fourth, or five without Him being the sixth, or fewer than that or more without Him being with them wherever they are. Then He will inform them on the Day of Resurrection of what they did. Allah has knowledge of all things. (Surat al-Mujadala, 7)

Many verses tell how futile and useless are the efforts of the unbelievers, who unite their forces and plot evil actions against good people, to conceal their wickedness.

They try to conceal themselves from people, but they cannot conceal themselves from Allah. He is with them when they spend the night saying things that are not pleasing to Him. Allah encompasses everything they do. (Surat an-Nisa', 108)

It makes no difference whether you keep secret what you say or voice it out loud, whether you hide in the night or go out in the day. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 10)

Do not consider Allah to be unaware of what the wrongdoers perpetrate. He is merely deferring them to a Day on which their sight will be transfixed. (Surah Ibrahim, 42)

Unable to immediately see the reward of their trickery, the plotters deceive themselves. Despite all of Allah's messengers' warnings, they persist in their wickedness. Allah is aware of each of their plans, but gives them a certain amount of time. So, believers who know of His promise endure their oppression with patient trust.

I will allow them more time. My device is sure. (Surat al-Qalam, 45)

They are hatching a plot. I too am hatching a plot. So bear with the unbelievers – bear with them for a while. (Surat at-Tariq, 15-17)

Do not imagine that the unbelievers have gotten ahead. They are quite powerless. (Surat al-Anfal, 59)

He [Nuh] began to build the Ark, and every time some nobles of his people passed by they ridiculed him. He said: "Though you ridicule us now, we will certainly ridicule you as you do us. You will soon know who will receive a punishment that disgraces him and find unleashed against himself an everlasting punishment." (Surah Hud, 38-39)

Messengers before you were mocked. I gave those who did not believe a little more time, and then I seized them. How terrible was My retribution! (Surat ar-Ra'd, 32)

Allah has promised that all such traps are doomed to fail:

They desired to trap him, but We made them the losers. (Surat al-Anbiya', 70)

If anyone wants power, all power belongs to Allah. All good words rise to Him, and He raises up all virtuous deeds. But people who plot evil deeds will suffer a harsh punishment. Their plotting is profitless. (Surah Fatir, 10)

Or do they desire to dupe you? But the duped ones are the unbelievers. (Surat at-Tur, 42)

THE MESSENGERS' AND BELIEVERS' REACTIONS

Certainly, assaults against a messenger and the believers are serious enough to intimidate those without faith. For example, when some people believed in Musa (as) after seeing his miracles and sided with him, Pharaoh threatened them:

Pharaoh said: "Do you believe in him before I have author-

ized you? Surely this must be your leader, the one who taught you magic. I will cut off your hands and feet alternately and have you crucified on palm trunks. Then you will know for certain which of us has the harsher and longer lasting punishment." (Surah Ta Ha, 71)

This kind of threat would deter most people, but the believers were not influenced by it:

They said: "We will never prefer you to the clear signs that have come to us, nor to Him Who brought us into being. Decide on any judgment you like. Your jurisdiction only covers the life of this world. We have believed in our Lord so that He may forgive us for our mistakes and for the magic that you forced us to perform. Allah is better and longer lasting." (Surah Ta Ha, 72-73)

The Qur'an also reveals that the believers are brave and secure when confronted with the unbelievers' threats:

The ruling circle of those who were arrogant said: "We will drive you out of our city, Shu'ayb, you and those who believe along with you, unless you return to our religion." He exclaimed: "What, even though we detest it? We would be inventing lies against Allah if we returned to your religion after Allah has saved us from it. We could never return to it unless Allah our Lord so willed. Our Lord encompasses everything in His knowledge. We have put our trust in Allah. Our Lord, judge between us and our people with truth. You are the best of judges." (Surat al-A'raf, 88-89)

Recite to them the story of Nuh, when he said to his people: "My people, if my standing here and reminding you of Allah's signs has become too much for you to bear, know

that I have put my trust in Allah. So decide, you and your deities, on what you want to do, and be open about it. Do with me whatever you decide, and do not keep me waiting." (Surah Yunus, 71)

Indeed, the Qur'an tells the messengers to be determined and secure against the unbelievers:

Say to those who do not believe: "Do as you think best. That is what we are doing." (Surah Hud, 121)

There can be no question of a messenger fearing or hesitating when confronted by the unbelievers, because they are **"those who conveyed Allah's message and had fear of Him, fearing no one except Allah"** (Surat al-Ahzab, 39).

The reason for a messenger's and the believers' resolute and courageous nature in such cases comes from their ability to understand each event's inner and secret truth: No thing and no person can escape what Allah has willed for them. Unbelievers are totally unaware of this truth and so think that their plans will succeed. However, they always fail to understand that they cannot do anything without Allah's permission, because it is He Who wills all that happens to each thing and person.

Therefore, the believers do not fear the unbelievers' plots, for: **"... The misguided cannot harm you as long as you are guided..."** (Surat al-Ma'ida, 105); **"... Allah will not give the unbelievers any way against the believers"** (Surat an-Nisa', 141); and, **"... if you are steadfast and guard against evil, their scheming will not harm you in any way. Allah encompasses what they do"** (Surah Al 'Imran, 120).

But this does not mean that the believers do not experience any trouble. Allah will test them by means of such assaults to bring them

to maturity. The Qur'an says that they will have the strength to endure their testing, for **"Allah does not impose on any self more than it can stand"** (Surat al-Baqara, 286).

This truth is explained in the following verse:

We will test you with a certain amount of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth, life, and fruits. But give good news to the steadfast. (Surat al-Baqara, 155)

In short, for a messenger and his followers, all the oppressions, accusations and assaults from unbelievers are a test from Allah. For this reason, they are determined, secure and patient in what they have to endure, they never become stricken with panic or fear. The Qur'an tells of these qualities evident in believers:

Those to whom people said: "The people have gathered against you, so fear them." But that merely increased their faith, and they replied: "Allah is enough for us and is the Best of Guardians." (Surah Al 'Imran, 173)

But notice that the messengers' and the believers' patience does not mean that they endure their difficulties passively. On the contrary, the messengers are always able to foil the traps set for them and to defeat the unbelievers by turning their traps against them. Allah's messengers are very intelligent, provident, resourceful, knowledgeable, and able to make effective plans of their own to achieve victory. In the following pages, we will deal with their plans and courses of action, as mentioned in the Qur'an.

How the Messengers Fight the Unbelievers

Allah assists the messengers and their followers by giving them strength and support. A messenger especially receives support from Allah; the Qur'an tells us that He gives them knowledge, wisdom,

clarity of expression, maturity, and the ability to make right decisions. Besides this, Allah gives them great possessions (e.g., material wealth, power, and magnificence).

For example, Talut, the chosen leader of the Israelites, was given knowledge, physical strength, and kingship:

Their prophet said to them: "Allah has appointed Talut to be your king." They replied: "How can he have kingship over us when we have much more right to kingship than he does? He does not even have much wealth." He said: "Allah has chosen him over you, and has favored him greatly in knowledge and physical strength. Allah gives kingship to anyone He wills. Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing." (Surat al-Baqara, 247)

The Qur'an tells us that Allah supported Ibrahim (as) and his offspring with wisdom and an immense kingdom:

Or do they, in fact, envy other people for the bounty Allah has granted them? We gave the family of Ibrahim the Book and Wisdom, and We gave them an immense kingdom. (Surat an-Nisa', 54)

We are told that Yusuf (as) received the same support:

And then when he [Yusuf] became a full-grown man, We gave him knowledge and right judgment too. That is how We reward all doers of good. (Surah Yusuf, 22)

And later, while saying his prayers, Yusuf (as) said:

"My Lord, You have granted power to me in the land and taught me the true meaning of events..." (Surah Yusuf, 101)

Dawud (as) also was given kingship and wisdom (Surat al-Baqara, 251):

We made his [Dawud's] kingdom strong and gave him wis-

dom and decisive speech. (Surah Sâd, 20)

With such support, a messenger engages in an intellectual struggle against the leading unbelievers. Allah directs this struggle. With his wisdom and insight, a messenger always shows his superiority in such an intellectual struggle, for the unbelievers can never answer his sound ideas and so are always defeated. Messengers always have the truth on their side and are always victorious over unbelief.

A messenger humiliates the unbelievers

The struggle between a messenger and the unbelievers is actually a taste of the pain of this world that Allah gives to the latter. For those who are devoted to ostentation and seeking others' approval, humiliation is a very severe punishment:

Those before them also denied the truth, and the punishment came upon them from where they did not expect. So Allah made them taste disgrace in the life of this world. The punishment of the Hereafter is far worse, if they only knew. (Surat az-Zumar, 25-26)

Allah manifests this attribute through the believers, and especially through His messengers:

Fight them! Allah will punish them at your hands and disgrace them, and [will] help you against them and heal the hearts of the believers. He will remove the rage from their hearts. Allah turns to anyone He wills. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba, 14-15)

Sulayman (as), who was sent as a messenger to the Israelites, who denied His existence, also humiliated and belittled these unbelievers:

**... "We will come to them with troops that they cannot face,
and We will expel them from it abased and humiliated."
(Surat an-Naml, 37)**

Therefore, humiliating the unbelievers is an important part of this struggle. Most often, such humiliation is enough to get the unbelievers to show their real faces, because they have reached the apex of denial and corruption. They are degenerate. Throughout history, perversion, dishonesty, and other such corruptions have been among their defining characteristics. But these leaders have hidden their degenerate lives from the general public. Revealing it is one of ways to make others aware of such people's disgrace and humiliation.

Unbelievers fear believers, and are shaken by the messengers' and the believers' strength, intelligence, and determination:

**You are a greater cause of terror in their breasts than Allah!
This is because they are people who do not understand.
(Surat al-Hashr, 13)**

In another verse, Allah says that they will be filled with fear:

**We will cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers because
they have associated others with Allah, [a practice] for which
He has sent down no authority. Their shelter will be the Fire.
How evil is the abode of the wrongdoers! (Surah Al 'Imran,
151)**

All of the messengers mentioned in the Qur'an always defeated the unbelievers. Every people that did not listen to their message and heed their warnings finally perished, and every wicked plan they devised was foiled.

How the messengers foil the unbelievers' traps

The Qur'an informs us of these traps. But most importantly, it tells us that Allah devises traps (or plots) in return for those who reject His existence. As the Qur'an states: "**They plotted and Allah plotted. But Allah is the best plotter**" (Surah Al 'Imran, 54). We are also told that Allah sets traps for those who try to entrap a messenger:

When those who do not believe were plotting to imprison you, kill you, or expel you: they were plotting and Allah was plotting, but Allah is the best plotter. (Surat al-Anfal, 30)

One of Allah's titles is *al-Makir*, or *The Plotter*. Another verse reveals this title:

They concocted their plots, but their plots were with Allah, even if they were such as to make the mountains vanish. (Surah Ibrahim, 46)

They hatched a plot, and We hatched a plot while they were not aware. (Surat an-Naml, 50)

Note that the title *The Plotter*, just like the title *The Humiliator*, is manifested in the believers and especially in the messengers. Allah often uses a messenger to set a trap for the unbelievers. Yusuf (as) is an example of this. His irreligious brothers threw him in a well when he was a young child. But Yusuf (as) was rescued and set a trap for them in turn:

Then when he [Yusuf] had supplied them with their needs, he put the goblet in his brother's bag. A herald called out: "Caravan! You are thieves!" They turned to them and asked: "What are you missing?" They said: "We're missing the king's goblet. The man who brings it will get a camel's load [reward]. Regarding that, I stand as guarantor." They ex-

claimed: "By Allah, you know we did not come to corrupt the land and that we are not thieves." They asked: "What is the reparation for it if, in fact, it transpires that you are liars?" They answered: "Its reparation shall be the owner of the saddlebags in which it is discovered. Among us, this is how wrongdoers are repaid." He started with their bags before his brother's, and then produced it from his brother's bag. In that way, We devised a cunning scheme for Yusuf. He could not have held his brother according to the statutes of the king – only because Allah had willed it so. We raise the rank of anyone We will. Over everyone with knowledge is a Knower. (Surah Yusuf, 70-76)

Another example of a trap is when Ibrahim (as) broke his people's idols:

We gave Ibrahim his right guidance early on, and We had complete knowledge of him. When he asked his father and his people: "What are these statues you are clinging to?" They replied: "We found our fathers worshipping them." He said: "You and your fathers are clearly misguided." They asked: "Have you brought us the truth, or are you playing games?" He said: "Far from it! Your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and Earth, He Who brought them into being. I am one of those who bear witness to that. By Allah, I will devise some scheme against your idols when your backs are turned." He broke them into pieces, except for the largest one, so that they would have it to consult. They exclaimed: "Who has done this to our deities? He is definitely one of the wrongdoers!" Some people said: "We heard a young man mentioning them. They call him Ibrahim." They said: "Bring him before the people's eyes so they can be witnesses." They

asked: "Did you do this to our deities, Ibrahim?" He replied: "No, this one, the largest of them, did it. Ask them, if they are able to speak!" They consulted among themselves and said: "You are wrongdoers." But then they relapsed back into their unbelief: "You know full well that these deities cannot talk." He said: "Do you worship, instead of Allah, that which cannot help or harm you in any way? Shame on you and what you worship besides Allah! Will you not use your intellect?" (Surat al-Anbiya', 51-67)

The Struggle between a Messenger and the Religion of the Ancestors

So far we have dealt with the struggle between a messenger and the unbelievers' leaders. But there are other groups who, for various reasons, also oppose a messenger. Among the most important of these groups are those conservative people who practice the religion of their ancestors and oppose the true religion as proclaimed by a messenger.

Earlier, when we spoke of a society that does not know Allah, we said that this group had separated themselves from religion and disregarded Allah. In other words, such a society has cut itself off from the pure truth of Allah's religion. But there are some religious beliefs in this society. In nearly every ignorant society mentioned in the Qur'an, there is some religious belief. In some aspects it may resemble Allah's religion, but its essence is quite different. True religion is based on knowing and serving Allah alone, being devoted to Him and to nothing else, and following His messengers. But these misguided people's concept of religion is based on their devotion to their ancestors and the determination to continue their traditions. This religion may often invoke Allah's name, but this is deceptive,

for there is no real faith, respect, or fear of Allah in it:

Ask: "To whom does Earth belong, and everyone in it, if you have any knowledge?" They will say: "To Allah." Ask: "So will you not pay heed?" Ask: "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?" They will say: "Allah." Ask: "So will you not fear Allah?" Ask: "In Whose hand is the dominion over everything, He Who gives protection and from Whom no protection can be given, if you have any knowledge?" They will say: "Allah's." Ask: "So how have you been bewitched?" The fact is that We have given them the truth and they are liars. (Surat al-Muminun, 84-90)

These people's situation is thought-provoking: They answer every question correctly (for example, they affirm that Allah has created everything), but their behavior is not consistent with their affirmation. When they are asked to think carefully about these things and warned to save themselves from the deception in which they live, they clearly do not understand the meaning of their answers.

The reason for this situation is very clear: These individuals do not believe in the true religion, but rather in a religion characterized by its not being founded on belief in, respect for, and fear of Allah, and not having the desire to seek His approval. This absence of a sound foundation is an attempt to preserve a few traditional beliefs and values passed down from a people's ancestors. The individuals described in the verses above have a more or less distinct belief in Allah, derived from their ancestral religion, but cannot grasp the truth of His existence or conceive of His attributes.

Also, this ancestral religion contains several misguided elements. Whereas true religion is based totally on Allah's revelation, this ancestral religion is severed from true religion and based on a few myths. For this reason, it has an incorrect understanding of such

matters as faith in Allah and morality. Therefore, a messenger and his followers oppose ancestral religion and call upon their society to practice the religion **"with which He is pleased"** (Surat an-Nur, 55).

Very often, people refuse to abandon their ancestral religion. The Qur'an speaks of them:

When they are told: "Come to what Allah has sent down and to the messenger," they say: "What we found our fathers doing is enough for us." What! Even if their fathers did not know anything and were not guided! (Surat al-Ma'ida, 104)

Similarly, We never sent any warner before you to any city without the affluent among them saying: "We found our fathers following a religion, and we are simply following in their footsteps." Ask: "What if I have come with a better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?" They say: "We reject what you have been sent with." (Surat az-Zukhruf, 23-24)

The reason for this attachment is clear: This ancestral religion is an important part of the traditional social order. By practicing it, they ensure the social order's legitimacy, and by following its rules they can easily make themselves appear religious and gain the public's confidence.

Some individuals remain faithful to their ancestral religion out of conservatism. They are against every kind of change and believe that everything old is good; they are submerged in the conservatism that is a tendency of the human self. Others make material profit from their ancestral religion and know that if they abandon it, the existing clerical system will collapse. The Qur'an says: **"O you who believe! Many of the rabbis and monks devour people's property under false pretences and bar people from access to Allah's way.**

As for those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in His way, give them the news of a painful punishment" (Surat at-Tawba, 34).

For this reason, a significant segment of society begins to defend the ancestral religion against the true religion proclaimed by a messenger. We can see this when the 'Ad people said to Hud (as): **"Have you come to us to make us worship Allah alone and abandon what our fathers used to worship? Then bring us what you have promised us, if you are telling the truth"** (Surat al-A'raf, 70); when the Thamud people said to Salih (as): **"Salih, we had great hopes in you before this happened. Do you forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped? We have grave doubts about what you are calling us to"** (Surah Hud, 62); and the court of Pharaoh who spoke against Musa (as): **"This is nothing but trumped-up magic. We never heard anything like this among our forefathers"** (Surat al-Qasas, 36).

Another major characteristic of these people is that they pretend to be religious when they assault a messenger and his followers. They invoke the name of Allah and of religion in an attempt to legitimize their assaults and oppression. This is nothing but pretense, because they have no interest in Allah or His religion. The Qur'an states that these people, even if they commit the greatest crime of murdering a messenger, claim to be acting in Allah's name:

To the Thamud people We sent their brother Salih, telling them to worship Allah... (Surat an-Naml, 45)

They said: "We see you, and those with you, as an evil omen." He [Salih] replied: "No, your evil omen is with Allah; you are merely a people undergoing a trial." A group of nine men in the city was causing corruption in the land and not

putting things right. They said: "Let us swear an oath with each other that by Allah we will fall on him and his family in the night and then say to his protector: 'We did not witness the destruction of his family, and we are telling the truth.'" They hatched a plot, and We hatched a plot while they were not aware. So look at the end result of all their plotting; We utterly destroyed them and their whole people! (Surat an-Naml, 47-51)

There is another group that uses the name of Allah in their hostility against a messenger. Almost every messenger has encountered these people who are called "hypocrites" in the Qur'an.

The Messengers' Struggle with the Hypocrites

Messengers and believers also have to confront the hypocrites who, unlike the groups discussed above, are "secret deniers" who appear to be believers. The Qur'an describes such people:

Among the people are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," when they are not believers. They think they deceive Allah and the believers. They deceive no one but themselves, but they are not aware of it. There is a sickness in their hearts, and Allah has increased their sickness. They will have a painful punishment because of their unbelief. (Surat al-Baqara, 8-10)

Hypocrites want to appear to be believers because they hope to receive some benefit from the real believers. They are jealous of the believers' material wealth, influence, and glamour and so pretend to be believers in order to benefit from these things. However, as the Qur'an says, they are only deceiving themselves because it is impossible to "imitate" a believer, for they can only imitate some of the ex-

ternal forms of religion. Thus, all believers can immediately detect such insincerity, as can any messenger. The Qur'an reveals that Allah gives each messenger a special understanding that enables him to recognize hypocrites:

Or did those with sickness in their hearts imagine that Allah would not expose their malevolence? If We wished, We would show them to you and you would know them by their mark and ambivalent speech. Allah knows your actions. (Surah Muhammad, 29-30)

Allah's messengers may not immediately disclose the hypocrites' true nature, but this will become apparent when they are called upon to sacrifice for the religion, for instance. Since they are interested in the believers and religion only for personal gain, their basic insincerity will become evident when they are asked to do something that will not materially benefit them.

This brings us to one of the hypocrite's salient characteristics: When a hypocrite gives up imitating a believer, he does not seek isolation, but rather tries to divert believers from Allah's way. He tries to destroy their zeal, make them doubt and despair, and weaken their loyalty to the messenger. No hypocrite will ever admit that he left the right road out of a sense of personal interest. As we read in the Qur'an, they say: **"What Allah and His messenger promised us was mere delusion"** (Surat al-Ahzab, 12) or **"These people have been deluded by their religion"** (Surat al-Anfal, 49). They lie and say that they are aware of truths that believers do not know, as when Samiri explained to Musa (as) why he led the people astray to worship the calf: **"I saw what they did not see"** (Surah Ta Ha, 96).

The Qur'an calls these acts "fitnah" (strife), which is one of the greatest sins: **"... Discord [strife] is worse than killing..."** (Surat al-Baqara, 217). A messenger certainly takes the appropriate measures

to prevent strife. Samiri is one of the clearest examples of a hypocrite, and Musa's (as) behavior toward him shows the messenger's determination to prevent such strife. The Qur'an relates in detail how Musa (as) responded to the strife that this man had stirred up after he had ascended Mount Tur alone to receive Allah's revelation:

[Allah asked:] "Why have you hurried on ahead of your people, Musa?" Musa said: "They are following in my tracks. I have hurried on ahead to you, my Lord, to gain Your good pleasure." He said: "We tried your people after you left, and Samiri has misguided them." Musa returned to his people in anger and great sorrow. He asked: "My people, did not your Lord make you a handsome promise? Did the fulfillment of the contract seem too long to you, or did you want to unleash your Lord's anger upon yourselves so that you broke your promise to me?" They replied: "We did not break our promise to you of our own volition. But we were weighed down with the heavy loads of the people's jewelry and we threw them in, for that is what Samiri did." Then he [Samiri] produced a calf for them, a physical form that made a lowing sound. So they said: "This is your deity – and Musa's deity as well, but he forgot." Could they not see that it did not reply to them and that it had no power to either harm or benefit them? Harun had earlier said to them: "My people! It is just a trial for you. Your Lord is the All-Merciful, so follow me and obey my command!" They replied: "We will not stop devoting ourselves to it until Musa returns to us." (Surah Ta Ha, 83-91)

He [Musa] asked: "What did you think you were doing, Samiri?" He answered: "I saw what they did not see. So I

gathered up a handful from the messenger's footprints and threw it in. That is what my inner self urged me to do." He [Musa] exclaimed: "Leave! In this world, you will have to say: 'Untouchable!' And you have an appointment that you will not fail to keep. Look at your deity to which you devoted so much time. We will burn it up and then scatter it as dust in the sea. Your deity is Allah alone. There is no deity but Him. He encompasses all things in His knowledge." (Surah Ta Ha, 95-98)

Clearly, a messenger responds to hypocrites with determination. Allah tells our Prophet (saas):

O Prophet! Strive against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh with them. Their refuge is Hell. What an evil destination! (Surat at-Tahrim, 9)

An important point here is that Musa's (as) people lacked an understanding of the true religion and were extremely disobedient. Believers are not influenced by the strife stirred up by hypocrites; their loyalty to the messenger just continues to grow. In such a situation, the hypocrites separate themselves as a body from the believers but, due to their desire for revenge, they do not go away. Rather, they do everything they can to prolong their opposition to the messenger and his followers. Even in this situation they do not acknowledge their insincerity, but still try to present themselves as true believers. The clearest example of this in the time of our Prophet (saas) was when the hypocrites built a new mosque after they had separated themselves from him. They did this only to express their hostility:

As for those who have set up a mosque, causing harm and out of disbelief in order to create division among the believ-

ers and in readiness for those who previously made war on Allah and His messenger, they will swear: "We only desired the best." But Allah bears witness that they are truly liars. Do not ever stand in it. A mosque founded on performing one's duty from the first day has a greater right upon you to stand [to pray] in it. In it are men who love to purify themselves. Allah loves those who purify themselves. Who is better: someone who founds his building on fear of Allah and His good pleasure, or someone who founds his building on the brink of a crumbling precipice so that it collapses with him into the Fire of Hell? Allah does not love wrongdoers. The buildings they have built will not cease to be a bone of contention in their hearts, until their hearts are cut to shreds. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba, 107-110)

These verses reveal the purpose behind the hypocrites' mosque: to harm believers. No matter how strongly they may claim that they only wanted to do good in establishing the mosque, their real purpose was to intensify their struggle against the Muslim community. The main difference between the two mosques was that the believers' mosque was based on true godliness - the believers' respect and fear of Allah and the desire to win His approval. The hypocrites' mosque, however, was based on their own whim and hostility against the believers; that is, in the words of the Qur'an, "on the brink of a crumbling precipice so that it collapses with him into the Fire of Hell." In the Hereafter, such people will be sent to the lowest regions of Hell.

The Messengers' Struggle against Immorality

A messenger's chief duty is to call his people to Allah's way and explain His religion to them. The groups he struggles with respond

to his call with hostility and try to stop him from delivering his message. He also tries to destroy the influence of those groups that want to lead people astray and prevent them from following His way: **"They keep others from it and avoid it themselves..."** (Surat al-An'am, 26). For example, those who work to promote immoral conduct and indecency want to draw others into the same perversions in which they indulge:

People who love to see immorality being spread among those who believe will have a painful punishment both in this world and the Hereafter. Allah knows and you do not know. (Surat an-Nur, 19)

Those who work to spread immorality will experience the pangs of Hell in the Hereafter. They may experience different pangs in this world, and Allah may give them different troubles. The example of Lut (as) and his people shows how the messengers struggle against immorality. It records Lut's (as) warning to homosexuals and their response to him:

And Lut, when he said to his people: "Do you commit an obscenity not perpetrated before you by anyone in all the worlds? You come with lust to men instead of women. You are indeed a depraved people." The only answer of his people was to say: "Expel them from your city! They are people who keep themselves pure!" (Surat al-A'raf, 80-82)

Another verse informs us of Lut's (as) response to his people: **Lut's people denied the messengers, when their brother Lut said to them: "Will you not guard against evil? I am a faithful messenger to you. So have fear of Allah and obey me. I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of no one but the Lord of all the worlds. Of all beings, do**

you lie with males, leaving the wives Allah has created for you? You are a people who have overstepped the limits." They said: "Lut, if you do not desist you will be expelled." He replied: "I am someone who detests the deed you perpetrate. My Lord, rescue me and my family from what they are doing." Therefore We rescued him and all his family – except for an old woman who remained behind. Then We utterly destroyed the rest and made a rain come pouring down upon them. How evil is the rain of those who are warned! There is certainly a sign in that, yet most of them are not believers. Truly your Lord is the Almighty, the Most Merciful. (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 160-175)

Conclusion

When we look at the Qur'an, we see that all of the messengers and their faithful followers share a common destiny. The community of believers led by a messenger always begins its struggle as a small group. This community proclaims Allah's religion and struggles with enemies who appear to be much stronger. However, the messengers and the believers always emerge victorious, for: **"...How many a small force has triumphed over a much greater one by Allah's permission? Allah is with the steadfast"** (Surat al-Baqara, 249).

All of these struggles are conducted according to Allah's will, for He created both the believers and their enemies. The Qur'an tells us that Allah made special enemies for messengers to struggle against:

In this way, We have appointed as enemies to every prophet, satans from both humanity and the jinn, who inspire each other with delusions by means of specious words – if your Lord had willed, they would not have done it. So abandon them and all they fabricate. (Surat al-An'am, 112)

In this way, We have assigned to every prophet an enemy

from among the evildoers. But your Lord is a sufficient guide and helper. (Surat al-Furqan, 31)

Allah has created both sides of this struggle and determines the outcome. He has written the victory of the messengers, so these people cannot be defeated:

Allah has written: "I will be victorious, I and My messengers." Allah is Most Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Mujadala, 21)

One of the reasons why a community of believers experiences apparent defeats is because they do not obey the messenger. Surah Al 'Imran states that some believers did not obey our Prophet's (saas) commands during the Battle of Uhud, and therefore they lost that battle, even though they were apparently going to win. But this temporary defeat was useful for believers as part of a training process designed to teach them how to obey. Finally, the Prophet (saas) and his faithful followers were victorious. And those who are hostile to a messenger always come to the same end: humiliation in this world and the pangs of Hell in the Hereafter:

Those who oppose Allah and His messenger will be subdued and overcome, just as those before them were also subdued and overcome. We have sent down clear signs. The unbelievers will have a humiliating punishment. On the Day Allah raises up all of them together, He will inform them of what they did. Allah has recorded it, while they have forgotten it. Allah is a Witness of all things. (Surat al-Mujadala, 5-6)

On the other hand, those who submit themselves to a messenger are rewarded with victory in this world, Paradise in the Hereafter, and, above all, His good pleasure. In the Qur'an, messen-

gers and their faithful followers are called "the party of Allah," and their reward in the Hereafter is described in these words:

You will not find people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having love for anyone who opposes Allah and His messenger, although they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their clan. Allah has inscribed faith upon such people's hearts and will reinforce them with a Spirit from Him and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. Such people are the party of Allah. Truly, it is the party of Allah who is successful. (Surat al-Mujadala, 22)

Other verses say that the messengers and their followers will certainly be victorious:

Our Word was given before to Our servants, the messengers, that they would certainly be helped. It is Our army that will be victorious. (Surat as-Saffat, 171-173)

With Allah's permission, the party of Allah will prevail. His word is true and will most certainly be fulfilled.

The Deception of Evolution

Darwinism, in other words the theory of evolution, was put forward with the aim of denying the fact of creation, but is in truth nothing but failed, unscientific nonsense. This theory, which claims that life emerged by chance from inanimate matter, was invalidated by the scientific evidence of miraculous order in the universe and in living things. In this way, science confirmed the fact that Allah created the universe and the living things in it. The propaganda carried out today in order to keep the theory of evolution alive is based solely on the distortion of the scientific facts, biased interpretation, and lies and falsehoods disguised as science.

Yet this propaganda cannot conceal the truth. The fact that the theory of evolution is the greatest deception in the history of science has been expressed more and more in the scientific world over the last 20-30 years. Research carried out after the 1980s in particular has revealed that the claims of Darwinism are totally unfounded, something that has been stated by a large number of scientists. In the United States in particular, many scientists from such different fields as biology, biochemistry and paleontology recognize the invalidity of Darwinism and employ the fact of creation to account for the origin of life.

We have examined the collapse of the theory of evolution and the proofs of creation in great scientific detail in many of our works, and are still continuing to do so. Given the enormous importance of this subject, it will be of great benefit to summarize it here.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this book, he denied that Allah created different living species on Earth separately, for he claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all of his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve these difficulties. However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties. The defeat of Darwinism in the face of science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

- 1) The theory cannot explain how life originated on Earth.
- 2) No scientific finding shows that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any evolutionary power at all.
- 3) The fossil record proves the exact opposite of what the theory suggests.

In this section, we will examine these three basic points in general outlines:

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive Earth 3.8 billion years ago. How a single cell could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces of it cannot be ob-

served in the fossil record are some of the questions that the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the "first cell" originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. Such a claim, however, is inconsistent with the most unassailable rules of biology.

"Life Comes From Life"

In his book, Darwin never referred to the origin of life. The primitive understanding of science in his time rested on the assumption that living beings had a very simple structure. Since medieval times, spontaneous generation, which asserts that non-living materials came together to form living organisms, had been widely accepted. It was commonly believed that insects came into being from food leftovers, and mice from wheat. Interesting experiments were conducted to prove this theory. Some wheat was placed on a dirty piece of cloth, and it was believed that mice would originate from it after a while.

Similarly, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

Even when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species*, the belief that bacteria could come into existence from non-living matter was widely accepted in the world of science.

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In

his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."¹

For a long time, advocates of the theory of evolution resisted these findings. However, as the development of science unraveled the complex structure of the cell of a living being, the idea that life could come into being coincidentally faced an even greater impasse.

Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930s, he tried to prove that a living cell could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession:

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.²

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve this problem. The best known experiment was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial Earth's atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, for the atmosphere used in the experiment was very different from the real Earth conditions.³

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.⁴

All the evolutionists' efforts throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended in failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada, from the San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth* magazine in 1998:

*Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?*⁵

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a great impasse regarding the origin of life is that even those living organisms deemed to be the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living thing is more complex than all of our man-made technological products. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing organic chemicals together.

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of a cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of a cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. If the information coded in DNA were written down, it would make a giant library consisting of an estimated 900 volumes of encyclopedias consisting of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: DNA can replicate itself only with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can be realized only by the in-

formation coded in DNA. As they both depend on each other, they have to exist at the same time for replication. This brings the scenario that life originated by itself to a deadlock. Prof. Leslie Orgel, an evolutionist of repute from the University of San Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the *Scientific American* magazine:

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.⁶

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated from natural causes, then it has to be accepted that life was "created" in a supernatural way. This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny creation.

Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

The second important point that negates Darwin's theory is that both concepts put forward by the theory as "evolutionary mechanisms" were understood to have, in reality, no evolutionary power.

Darwin based his evolution allegation entirely on the mechanism of "natural selection." The importance he placed on this mechanism was evident in the name of his book: *The Origin of Species, By Means of Natural Selection...*

Natural selection holds that those living things that are stronger and more suited to the natural conditions of their habitats will survive in the struggle for life. For example, in a deer herd under the threat of attack by wild animals, those that can run faster will survive. Therefore, the deer herd will be comprised of faster and stronger individuals. However, unquestionably, this mechanism will not cause deer to evolve and transform themselves into another living species, for instance, horses.

Therefore, the mechanism of natural selection has no evolutionary power. Darwin was also aware of this fact and had to state this in his book *The Origin of Species*:

*Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.*⁷

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favorable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science at that time. According to the French biologist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation. He asserted that these traits, which accumulated from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, he claimed that giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples. In his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.⁸

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Gregor Mendel (1822-84) and verified by the science of genetics, which flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favor as an evolutionary mechanism.

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

In order to find a solution, Darwinists advanced the "Modern Synthetic Theory," or as it is more commonly known, Neo-Darwinism,

at the end of the 1930's. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings due to such external factors as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favorable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

Today, the model that stands for evolution in the world is Neo-Darwinism. The theory maintains that millions of living beings formed as a result of a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms (e.g., ears, eyes, lungs, and wings) underwent "mutations," that is, genetic disorders. Yet, there is an outright scientific fact that totally undermines this theory: Mutations do not cause living beings to develop; on the contrary, they are always harmful.

The reason for this is very simple: DNA has a very complex structure, and random effects can only harm it. The American geneticist B. G. Ranganathan explains this as follows:

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.⁹

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer.) Of course, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself," as

Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, no such any imaginary process called "evolution" could have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

The clearest evidence that the scenario suggested by the theory of evolution did not take place is the fossil record.

According to this theory, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else over time and all species have come into being in this way. In other words, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

Had this been the case, numerous intermediary species should have existed and lived within this long transformation period.

For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in the past which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since these would be in a transitional phase, they should be disabled, defective, crippled living beings. Evolutionists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as "transitional forms."

If such animals ever really existed, there should be millions and even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.¹⁰

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All of the fossils, contrary to the evolutionists' expectations, show that life appeared on Earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

*The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find—over and over again—not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.*¹¹

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, this is very strong evidence that all living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor is that it was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

*Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.*¹²

Fossils show that living beings emerged fully developed and in a perfect state on the Earth. That means that "the origin of species," contrary to Darwin's supposition, is not evolution, but creation.

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that modern man evolved from ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors are supposed to have existed. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

1. *Australopithecus*
2. *Homo habilis*
3. *Homo erectus*
4. *Homo sapiens*

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors *Australopithecus*, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹³

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to their claim, the living beings in the *Homo* series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the twentieth century's most important evolutionists, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of *Homo sapiens*, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."¹⁴

By outlining the link chain as *Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens*, evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus* lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁵

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁶

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. Stephen Jay Gould, explained this deadlock of the theory of evolution, although he was himself one of the leading advocates of evolution in the twentieth century:

*What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.*¹⁷

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is "upheld" with the help of various drawings of some "half ape, half human" creatures appearing in the media and course books, that is, frankly, by means of propaganda, is nothing but a tale with no scientific foundation.

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years and studied *Australopithecus* fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact, no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

Zuckerman also made an interesting "spectrum of science" ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most "scientific"—that is, depending on concrete data—fields of science are chemistry and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At

the far end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most "unscientific," are "extra-sensory perception"—concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense—and finally "human evolution." Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

*We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible—and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.*¹⁸

The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people, who blindly adhere to their theory.

Darwinian Formula!

Besides all the technical evidence we have dealt with so far, let us now for once, examine what kind of a superstition the evolutionists have with an example so simple as to be understood even by children:

The theory of evolution asserts that life is formed by chance. According to this claim, lifeless and unconscious atoms came together to form the cell and then they somehow formed other living things, including man. Let us think about that. When we bring together the elements that are the building-blocks of life such as carbon, phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium, only a heap is formed. No matter what treatments it undergoes, this atomic heap cannot form even a single living being. If you like, let us formulate an "experiment" on this subject and let us examine on the behalf of evolutionists what they really claim without pronouncing loudly under the name "Darwinian formula":

Let evolutionists put plenty of materials present in the composition of living things such as phosphorus, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, iron, and magnesium into big barrels. Moreover, let them add in these barrels any

material that does not exist under normal conditions, but they think as necessary. Let them add in this mixture as many amino acids and as many proteins—a single one of which has a formation probability of 10^{-950} —as they like. Let them expose these mixtures to as much heat and moisture as they like. Let them stir these with whatever technologically developed device they like. Let them put the foremost scientists beside these barrels. Let these experts wait in turn beside these barrels for billions, and even trillions of years. Let them be free to use all kinds of conditions they believe to be necessary for a human's formation. No matter what they do, they cannot produce from these barrels a human, say a professor that examines his cell structure under the electron microscope. They cannot produce giraffes, lions, bees, canaries, horses, dolphins, roses, orchids, lilies, carnations, bananas, oranges, apples, dates, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, figs, olives, grapes, peaches, peafowls, pheasants, multicoloured butterflies, or millions of other living beings such as these. Indeed, they could not obtain even a single cell of any one of them.

Briefly, unconscious atoms cannot form the cell by coming together. They cannot take a new decision and divide this cell into two, then take other decisions and create the professors who first invent the electron microscope and then examine their own cell structure under that microscope. Matter is an unconscious, lifeless heap, and it comes to life with Allah's superior creation.

The theory of evolution, which claims the opposite, is a total fallacy completely contrary to reason. Thinking even a little bit on the claims of tevolutionists discloses this reality, just as in the above example.

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

Another subject that remains unanswered by evolutionary theory is the excellent quality of perception in the eye and the ear.

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of how we see. Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the eye's retina. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain, the "center of vision." These electric signals are perceived in this center as an image after a series of processes. With this technical background, let us do some thinking.

The brain is insulated from light. That means that its inside is completely dark, and that no light reaches the place where it is located. Thus, the "center of vision" is never touched by light and may even be the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

The image formed in the eye is so sharp and distinct that even the technology of the twentieth century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you are reading, your hands with which you are holding it, and then lift your head and look around you. Have you ever seen such a sharp and distinct image as this one at any other place? Even the most developed television screen produced by the greatest television producer in the world cannot provide such a sharp image for you. This is a three-dimensional, colored, and extremely sharp image. For more than 100 years, thousands of engineers have been trying to achieve this sharpness. Factories, huge premises were established, much research has been done, plans and designs have been made for this purpose. Again, look at a TV screen and the book you hold in your hands. You will see that there is a big difference in sharpness and distinction. Moreover, the TV screen shows you a two-dimensional image, whereas with your eyes, you watch a three-dimensional perspective with depth.

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV and achieve the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system, but it is not pos-

sible to watch it without putting on special 3-D glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp and distinct image has been formed by chance. Now, if somebody told you that the television in your room was formed as a result of chance, that all of its atoms just happened to come together and make up this device that produces an image, what would you think? How can atoms do what thousands of people cannot?

If a device producing a more primitive image than the eye could not have been formed by chance, then it is very evident that the eye and the image seen by the eye could not have been formed by chance. The same situation applies to the ear. The outer ear picks up the available sounds by the auricle and directs them to the middle ear, the middle ear transmits the sound vibrations by intensifying them, and the inner ear sends these vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalizes in the center of hearing in the brain.

The situation in the eye is also true for the ear. That is, the brain is insulated from sound just as it is from light. It does not let any sound in. Therefore, no matter how noisy is the outside, the inside of the brain is completely silent. Nevertheless, the sharpest sounds are perceived in the brain. In your completely silent brain, you listen to symphonies, and hear all of the noises in a crowded place. However, were the sound level in your brain measured by a precise device at that moment, complete silence would be found to be prevailing there.

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original.

The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all of this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavor, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality hi-fi systems produced by the largest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a hi-fi you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the human body's technology are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does a hi-fi; rather, it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

So far, no man-made visual or recording apparatus has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are the eye and the ear. However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater truth lies beyond all this.

To Whom Does the Consciousness That Sees and Hears Within the Brain Belong?

Who watches an alluring world in the brain, listens to symphonies and the twittering of birds, and smells the rose?

The stimulations coming from a person's eyes, ears, and nose travel to the brain as electro-chemical nerve impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact: Who perceives these electro-chemical nerve impulses as images, sounds, odors, and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for an eye, an ear, and a nose. To whom does this consciousness belong?

Of course it does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer, and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot answer these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by Allah, which needs neither the eye to watch the images nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, it does not need the brain to think.

Everyone who reads this explicit and scientific fact should ponder on Almighty Allah, and fear and seek refuge in Him, for He squeezes the entire universe in a pitch-dark place of a few cubic centimeters in a three-dimensional, colored, shadowy, and luminous form.

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is incompatible with scientific findings. The theory's claim regarding the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the required intermediate forms have never existed. So, it certainly follows that the theory of evolution should be pushed aside as an unscientific idea. This is how many ideas, such as the Earth-centered universe model, have been taken out of the agenda of science throughout history.

However, the theory of evolution is kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against it as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that this theory is an indispensable dogmatic belief for some circles. These circles are blindly devoted to materialist philosophy and adopt Darwinism because it is the only materialist explanation that can be put forward to explain the workings of nature.

Interestingly enough, they also confess this fact from time to time. A well-known geneticist and an outspoken evolutionist, Richard C.

Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses that he is "first and foremost a materialist and then a scientist":

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.¹⁹

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to materialism. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore, it argues that inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species (e.g., birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales, and human beings) originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as pouring rain, lightning flashes, and so on, out of inanimate matter. This is a precept contrary both to reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as "not to allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Anyone who does not look at the origin of living beings with a materialist prejudice will see this evident truth: All living beings are works of a Creator, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise, and All-Knowing. This Creator is Allah, Who created the whole universe from non-existence, designed it in the most perfect form, and fashioned all living beings.

The Theory of Evolution: The Most Potent Spell in the World

Anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his or her reason and logic, will clearly understand that belief in the theory of evolution, which brings to mind the superstitions of societies with no knowledge of science or civilization, is quite

impossible.

As explained above, those who believe in the theory of evolution think that a few atoms and molecules thrown into a huge vat could produce thinking, reasoning professors and university students; such scientists as Einstein and Galileo; such artists as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Luciano Pavarotti; as well as antelopes, lemon trees, and carnations. Moreover, as the scientists and professors who believe in this nonsense are educated people, it is quite justifiable to speak of this theory as "the most potent spell in history." Never before has any other belief or idea so taken away peoples' powers of reason, refused to allow them to think intelligently and logically, and hidden the truth from them as if they had been blindfolded. This is an even worse and unbelievable blindness than the totem worship in some parts of Africa, the people of Saba worshipping the Sun, the tribe of Prophet Ibrahim (as) worshipping idols they had made with their own hands, or the people of Prophet Musa (as) worshipping the Golden Calf.

In fact, Allah has pointed to this lack of reason in the Qur'an. In many verses, He reveals that some peoples' minds will be closed and that they will be powerless to see the truth. Some of these verses are as follows:

As for those who do not believe, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allah has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Surat al-Baqara, 6-7)

... They have hearts with which they do not understand. ... They have eyes with which they do not see. They have ears with which they do not hear. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Surat al-A`raf, 179)

Even if We opened up to them a door into heaven, and they spent the day ascending through it, they would only say: "Our eyesight is befuddled! Or rather we have been put under a spell!" (Surat al-Hijr, 14-15)

Words cannot express just how astonishing it is that this spell should hold such a wide community in thrall, keep people from the truth, and not be broken for 150 years. It is understandable that one or a few people might believe in impossible scenarios and claims full of stupidity and illogicality. However, "magic" is the only possible explanation for people from all over the world believing that unconscious and lifeless atoms suddenly decided to come together and form a universe that functions with a flawless system of organization, discipline, reason, and consciousness; a planet named Earth with all of its features so perfectly suited to life; and living things full of countless complex systems.

In fact, the Qur'an relates the incident of Prophet Musa (as) and Pharaoh to show that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told Prophet Musa (as) to meet with his own magicians. When Musa (as) did so, he told them to demonstrate their abilities first. The verses continue:

He said: "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. (Surat al-A`raf, 116)

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from Musa (as) and those who believed in him. However, his evidence broke the spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged," as the verse puts it:

We revealed to Musa, "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth

took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Surat al-A`raf, 117-118)

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge, who was an atheist defending evolution for some 60 years, but who subsequently realized the truth, reveals the position in which the theory of evolution would find itself in the near future in these terms :

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.²⁰

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that "chance" is not a deity, and will look back on the theory of evolution as the worst deceit and the most terrible spell in the world. That spell is already rapidly beginning to be lifted from the shoulders of people all over the world. Many people who see its true face are wondering with amazement how they could ever have been taken in by it.

Notes

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*They said, "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except
what You have taught us. You are
the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Surat al-Baqara, 32)*